

REMARKS

In response to the final Office Action of October 9, 2007, applicants ask that all claims be allowed in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-39 are pending, of which claims 1, 29, and 30 are independent.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-12, 15, 16, and 21-39

Claims 1-12, 15, 16, and 21-39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,247,043 (Bates) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,835,089 (Skarbo). Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-12, 15, 16, and 21-39 because none of Bates, Skarbo, or any proper combination of Bates and Skarbo describes or suggests all of the features recited in independent claims 1, 29, and 30, as described more fully below.

Independent claim 1 recites a method for enabling management of contacts that includes, among other features, enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts.

Acknowledging that Bates fails to describe or suggest multiple applications, the Office Action relies on Skarbo for teaching multiple different applications. See final Office Action of October 9, 2007 at page 3, line 6-15. In particular, the Office Action contends that, when combined, Bates and Skarbo teach enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts and that "[i]t would have been obvious to combine Bates [sic] system of auto group with Skarbo [sic] system of making it available to multiple application [sic] [because] it simplifies the maintenance of the address information of applications." Final Office Action of October 9, 2007 at page 3, lines 12-14.

Because, as the Office Action acknowledges, Bates fails to describe or suggest multiple applications, it is indisputable that Bates fails to teach enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts. Furthermore, putting aside the question of whether or not Bates teaches enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group, Skarbo does not describe or suggest enabling a member to send communications to a group (or even an individual for that matter) using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group (or individual) is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group (or individual). Consequently, because Skarbo does not describe or suggest enabling a member to send communications to a group (or even an individual) using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group (or individual) is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group (or individual), the combination of Bates and Skarbo necessarily fails to teach enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts, as recited in independent claim 1, irrespective of whether Bates teaches enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group.

In response to perceived problems with then-existing single application, electronic address book applications which required users to maintain a separate address book for each communication application that he/she used (e.g., separate e-mail, telephone number, and fax number address books), Skarbo describes a shared address book for multiple communication applications. See, e.g., Skarbo at col. 2, lines 3-31 and 40-42. Figure 4 of Skarbo, which is reproduced below for reference, illustrates a user interface provided by Skarbo's shared address book for multiple applications and is illustrative of Skarbo's shared address book for multiple communication applications:

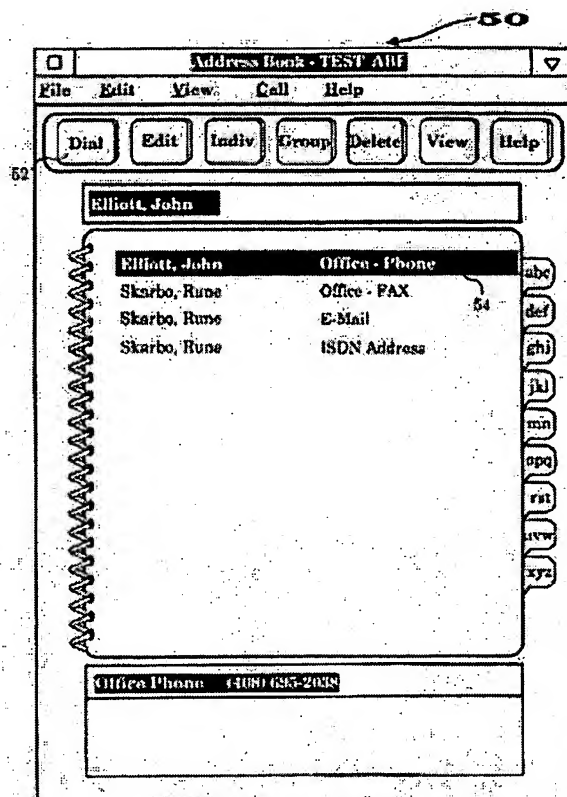


Figure 4

Reproduction of Skarbo's Figure 4.

As reflected in Skarbo's Figure 4, Skarbo's shared address book for multiple communication applications enables a user to store multiple different addresses corresponding to multiple different communications applications for a single individual. For example, as illustrated in Skarbo's Figure 4, the user of Skarbo's shared address book has stored an office fax number, an e-mail address, and an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) address for Rune Skarbo. Importantly, each different address for Rune Skarbo is represented by a separate entry in Skarbo's shared address book. Therefore, if the user of Skarbo's shared address book wants to contact Rune Skarbo by office fax, the user must select the entry corresponding to Rune Skarbo's office fax number from the shared address book, whereas if the user wants to contact Rune Skarbo by e-mail, the user must select the entry corresponding to Rune Skarbo's e-mail address from the shared address book, or if the user wants to contact Rune Skarbo by ISDN, the user must select the entry corresponding to Rune Skarbo's ISDN address from the shared address

book. As such, Skarbo fails to describe or suggest enabling a member to send communications to a group (or even an individual) using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group (or individual) is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group (or individual).

Consequently, because Skarbo does not describe or suggest enabling a member to send communications to a group (or even an individual) using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group (or individual) is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group (or individual), the combination of Bates and Skarbo necessarily fails to teach enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts, as recited in independent claim 1. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-12, 15, 16, 21-28, and 31-35, which depend from independent claim 1.

Independent claims 29 and 30 recite features similar to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 1, and do so in the context of an apparatus (claim 29) and a system (claim 30). Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with independent claim 1, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 29 and 30 and dependent claims 36 and 37, which depend from independent claim 29, and dependent claims 38 and 39, which depend from independent claim 30.

Claims 13, 14, and 17-20

Dependent claims 13, 14, and 17-20, each of which depends from independent claim 1, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over various combinations of Bates, Skarbo, U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0003071 (Mathew), and U.S. Patent No. 6,678,719 (Stimmel). However, neither Mathew nor Stimmel cures the deficiencies in Bates and Skarbo noted above. Accordingly, because of their dependencies and at least for the reasons discussed above in connection with independent claim 1, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 13, 14, and 17-20.

Claims 19 and 20

Dependent claims 19 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. as being obvious over Bates in view of Skarbo further in view of Stimmel.¹

Dependent claim 19 recites processes involved in enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts. In particular, claim 19 recites that enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts includes receiving an indication of a selected application to use to send a communication to the group of contacts, recognizing that a contact within the group of contacts is identified by a single identifier that is inoperable for addressing a message to be sent using the selected application, prompting the member for a different single identifier for the contact that may be used to address the message to be sent using the selected application, and replacing the single identifier with the different single identifier in the group of contacts.

Importantly, Bates, Skarbo, and Stimmel, when taken individually or in combination, do not describe or suggest recognizing that a contact within a group of contacts is identified by a single identifier that is inoperable for addressing a message to be sent using a selected application, prompting the member for a different single identifier for the contact that may be used to address the message to be sent using the selected application, and replacing the single identifier with the different single identifier in the group of contacts, as recited in dependent claim 19. Accordingly, for at least these additional reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claim 19.

Like dependent claim 19, dependent claim 20 recites processes involved in enabling a member to send communications to a group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using a specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts. In particular, dependent claim 20

¹ Applicants note that although the Office Action indicates that dependent claims 19 and 20 have been rejected as obvious over the combination of Bates, Skarbo, and Stimmel, the grounds for rejection set forth in the Office Action for claims 19 and 20 do not cite any portion of Stimmel as reading on any of the features recited in dependent claims 19 and 20.

recites that enabling the member to send communications to the group of contacts using any one of multiple different applications by using the specific identifier by which the group is represented to address communications that are to be sent to the group of contacts includes receiving an indication of a selected application to use to send a communication to the group of contacts, recognizing that a contact within the group of contacts is identified by a single identifier that is inoperable for addressing a message to be sent using the selected application, and omitting the contact from the group for the purpose of sending communications using the selected application.

As discussed above in connection with dependent claim 19, Bates, Skarbo, and Stimmel, when taken individually or in combination, do not describe or suggest recognizing that a contact within a group of contacts is identified by a single identifier that is inoperable for addressing a message to be sent using a selected application, as recited in dependent claim 20. Bates, Skarbo, and Stimmel, when taken individually or in combination, also do not describe or suggest omitting the contact from the group for the purpose of sending communications using the selected application, as recited in dependent claim 20. Accordingly, for at least these additional reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claim 20.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fees are believed due. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

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Respectfully submitted,

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